

THE EVIDENCE SPEAKS

Will you listen?

“The Evidence Speaks” Season 01 Episode 02 – *SLIM* – Transcript

00:00:00 STEWART

And here's a picture at my parents' wedding in '51. There's Slim.

00:00:07 CENSULLO

It was by coincidence that I wound up sitting in Steve Stewart's office in downtown Tampa, FL looking through old photo albums on the 58th anniversary of Peggy Beck's murder. It was also coincidental that someone so closely tied to Peggy's case lived mere miles away from me.

It was a recent random Google search from 2 weeks earlier on Steve's part that brought the two of us together. He'd been killing time in Denver's airport and did what most bored travelers do: he picked up his phone and started surfing the web.

00:00:47 STEWART

I was waiting for the flight to Tampa to come in and whatnot, and I just sort of thought I should Google what's going on at the Flying G Ranch just for the heck of it. And then when I did that all these articles came up about what happened in the April-May 2020 time frame. When this case, when the break in the case happened with the DNA testing. So I'm looking at this going, I just can't believe it.

00:01:17 CENSULLO

He read the headlines about the oldest cold case solved to date using investigative genetic genealogy. And then he watched the entire Jefferson County Sheriff's Office press conference about the case just to hear it for himself.

00:01:34 SCHRADER

But at this point in time, we're confident that we have the suspect who is responsible for the murder of Peggy Beck. Again, thank you for coming out today.

00:01:44 STEWART

I mean, you talk about a case that didn't have a chance of going anywhere, finding out who the perpetrator was, it was this one.

00:01:51 CENSULLO

That press conference was big news for the family of Peggy Beck, but it was also big news, albeit delayed for Steve's family. And that's because, when a man named James Raymond Taylor was identified as Peggy's killer, Steve's grandfather was once and for all cleared of suspicion in the case.

00:02:15 STEWART

This is a real sideline to what happened there. I mean, the bad thing, really awful thing being the murder of course, and uh, you know, I just can't tell you how glad we were to hear that they'd finally, you know, not only identified who did it, but ruled our grandfather out.

00:02:38 CENSULLO

Steve's grandfather was Alvin "Slim" Sherwood, the one-time caretaker of the Flying G Ranch and the first man suspected in Peggy's murder.

00:02:49 STEWART

And that's the kind of thing you wish had come to light. My dad died in '13. My mother died 20 years ago and we kind of wished that information had been around so you could tell him. But, that's the way things go. But it's to me, it's just incredible that this ever got pieced together.

00:03:07 CENSULLO

The day that we met wasn't just the anniversary of Peggy's death, it also marked the 58th anniversary of the last time Steve saw his Grandpa Slim. The morning of August 18th, 1963. Hours later, Slim would be taken to the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office to be questioned about Peggy's murder which had occurred at the Flying G Ranch while everyone was asleep. Everyone, including the then 11-year-old Steve Stewart.

I'm Meredyth Censullo, and this is "The Evidence Speaks," part 2: Slim.

00:03:54 STEWART

It's just inconceivable this would happen. I mean you would have a rattlesnake bite you maybe, or you'd fall off a horse and get hurt or whatever, it would be that kind of thing and have a bad insect bite or a tick or run into a raccoon or whatever the heck it would be. That be the danger of going up there, not this.

00:04:19 CENSULLO

For the record, only one of those things happened to Steve at the Flying G.

00:04:24 STEWART

I can remember when I was eight. We went up there and he had me get on a colt they were trying to break and that's where I think I derived my hatred for horses after that. But they put me on it and I got knocked off and it was hilarious, you know?

00:04:42 CENSULLO

The "he" Steve's referring to is his grandfather, Alvin Sherwood, who everyone knew by the cowboy-esque moniker, Slim.

00:04:51 STEWART

Nobody called him Alvin, but I didn't even know his first name till later. I mean, I had no idea his first name was really Alvin.

00:04:57 CENSULLO

And if you're confused, wondering why a boy would be visiting a Girl Scout camp, that is valid. But the answer is simple. Slim was the only permanent resident of the Flying G Ranch, aside from the horses anyway. For most of his childhood, Steve's family made a few trips every year to the Flying G Ranch to visit Slim.

00:05:22 STEWART

So we lived in Denver and we would go up and stay a few days to see him every year and you know he was just a terrific guy.

00:05:33 CENSULLO

Slim was a World War One veteran, and lifelong horse breeder and ranch hand. He was hired by the Denver-area Girls Scout Council in 1949 to be the ranch caretaker. He was given a place to stay and full reign over the stable of horses used by the Girl Scouts in the summer months.

00:05:54 STEWART

They wanted somebody there the whole year round so it was kept in fairly decent repair and nobody got in there and burned anything up or that kind of thing, and the horses. The horses were something that, so he's the perfect person for this, this job. Yeah look, you know live up there in this crappy cabin you know, he was really. That cabin had to have been, I don't know how old that cabin was.

00:06:21 CENSULLO

Slim though, was perfectly happy in his ramshackle cabin in the woods. It didn't have a bathroom, just an outhouse, but it did have electricity, a phone, and a fireplace. That was more than enough for Slim, although it wasn't ideal for his visiting relatives.

00:06:40 STEWART

I remember the 1960 NFL Championship game and that was between the Packers and the Eagles and we were up at Slim's and my dad was going nuts trying to get that game on. He at one point, now remember this is December up there, it's freezing, and he gets up on the roof. They were trying to get the antenna. Around so you know. Finally they caught the stupid game.

00:07:05 CENSULLO

Although Slim's daughters and their families lived not too far away in Denver and Colorado Springs, Slim wasn't much for spending time anywhere but the Flying G.

00:07:16 STEWART

I mean, I could remember, "Slim's coming down in two days with the Christmas trees," and so we go, "all right!" You know he'll be down here in the morning and then my dad would make a comment about,

"gosh, I wish we could get him to stay for lunch." And it was, naw he wasn't going to do that, so he shows up with his truck. We take these gorgeous Christmas trees, I mean. He knew right where to get the best ones you know and my mother go, "oh, Slimmy, stay here and let's have lunch, come on," and he go, "oh no, I gotta get back." You know he just got out of there. He got back and he got in that truck and took off. He wasn't rude, it just he got off the reservation and wanted to go back, you know?

00:07:55 CENSULLO

Steve and his family chalked much of Slim's desire for solitude up to his appearance.

00:08:02 STEWART

He was shy though. I mean, it's one thing I remember as a kid. He was probably one of the shyest adults I'd ever seen, and then when I look back on it later, I think it was the way his face looked.

00:08:16 CENSULLO

Slim had been disfigured in World War One, not by gunfire or anything like that. His injuries were the result of prolonged exposure to sub-zero temperatures. Slim was among the US Army soldiers sent to Russia from 1918 until 1920. The only time the US has put troops on Russian soil.

00:08:40 STEWART

He had had, uh, some pretty disfiguring frostbite when he went in World War One when he was stationed in Vladivostok in Russia. And I mean it was bad and then it kind of disfigured his face and then in the early 50s he had radiation treatment on his face to try to get the his face to look better, I heard. And so I think he was very self-conscious of the way he looked, and I think he's just one of these people that did a heck of a lot better with animals than he did with people.

00:09:15 CENSULLO

So rather than coax Slim to visit them outside of his annual Christmas tree delivery, Steve's family would go to him. They'd pile in the family station wagon and head to the Flying G Ranch, which meant traveling the carsick inducing 9-mile one lane dirt road that led to the Girl Scout camp.

00:09:36 STEWART

You come up the dirt road, where you finally get with a huge sigh of relief 'cause the trip up there really was monotonous. You come in and there was this cabin. So where he lived is where you'd first, at least the road we came up, that's where you'd first land if you will.

00:09:54 CENSULLO

Slim's cabin was just inside of the gate of the Flying G Ranch, as were the barn and some storage sheds. The Girl Scout facilities, including the Infirmary and tents, were farther up in the woods, well beyond Slim's rustic quarters.

00:10:11 STEWART

And then there was some distance to get to where the Girl Scout Ranch even started. And quite frankly, I really don't remember much about that because we never went up there. But it was very nice. I've got

pictures, you know it was beautiful up there. I mean, it really was and you know the we were up there several winters. I remember, and I mean it was really cold. It would snow like crazy. He had bear that would come in and one time we were up there and, uh, a bear was rattling around early in the morning and he had to go out and take a shot at it to run it off. And I remember my mother was pretty excited about it and it was just another day at work for Slim. There's no big deal. He just had to get the bear out of there.

00:10:53 CENSULLO

The occasional bear scare was the most excitement that seemed to happen at the Flying G. Before August of 63 anyway. As far as Steve can remember, Slim never reported seeing any two-legged predators on the camp property.

00:11:09 STEWART

Yeah, that would have definitely been, that would be very strange. I never remember hearing any time anybody was up there that shouldn't have been and I don't, I never even heard, the most common thing I would think would be hunters would go in there and hunt or they'd be doing something there. Then he'd get them out, but I never heard that story either. I mean, I'm telling you, it was just up there in the middle of nowhere.

00:11:31 CENSULLO

Steve's final trip to the Flying G Ranch was the weekend that Peggy Beck was murdered. Just a few months earlier, his family had relocated to Florida, but they were homesick for Colorado, so his mom took he and his sisters back for a three-week summer vacation in Denver and Colorado Springs on the last weekend of their Colorado trip, they went to see Slim and the whole thing was documented in one of Steve's photo albums.

00:11:59 STEWART

I mean there was Girl Scout people. And this is where we spent the night.

00:12:04 CENSULLO

He pulls out a black and white picture.

00:12:06 STEWART

Myself, my sister, my three cousins. Then you've got my mother, their mother, Janie, and then the other 20 Tyne and her two daughters.

00:12:19 CENSULLO

The caravan of Slim's family members arrived at the Flying G Ranch on Friday, August 16th.

00:12:26 STEWART

You got 10. You got 10 people going up to see him and you. You know his cabin you could probably, I think it had one bedroom and a large room with a fireplace in it. I mean there wasn't enough room for everybody, so fortunately they had built a brand-new garage. Uh, that was, it was kind of big. I think you

could put two or three trucks in there, or whatever maintenance vehicles they had. So they put together a bunch of cots. All of us went in there and that's where we stayed. And of course, Slim was in the cabin.

00:13:04 CENSULLO

Steve says he thinks his grandpa felt a little sorry for him because he was outnumbered by girls. So, Slim offered to take Steve on a drive before they all left that Sunday morning. Saturday night, Steve and the others fell asleep in that makeshift garage bunker, oblivious as everyone was to the fact that a crime was being committed inside of the camp's property. After a good night's sleep, Steve walked over to Slim's cabin.

00:13:38 STEWART

So I got up at whatever it was 6:30 or something and went over there. He was gulping down a cup of coffee and then we got in the truck and we sort of went around, like, a little tour of the Girl Scout Ranch. Now I gotta tell you, that's about the only time I've ever been back there and I remember it was pretty, how do I said it? By today by today's standards, that be a pretty primitive camp?

00:14:02 CENSULLO

The camp was quiet. The Girl Scouts hadn't gathered for breakfast and none of the campers had ventured out of their tents yet. After the tour, Slim and Steve returned to the cabin and joined the rest of the family for breakfast. Midmorning they began loading up their cars for the ride back down the mountain.

00:14:24 STEWART

I want to say we probably left 10:00 o'clock, maybe.

00:14:29 CENSULLO

So that they would have found her by then.

00:14:32 STEWART

Right.

00:14:33 CENSULLO

But there was nothing to indicate that.

00:14:34 STEWART

Not in, I mean nothing. I mean, look, and we would have remembered that if he, you know, he was saying goodbye to us, if something had happened that he had to go check out, I mean, he. But it was just normal, everything was normal.

00:14:50 CENSULLO

Or looked normal. Remember, after Peggy Beck was found dead around 8:00 AM, someone at the camp called the coroner's office and the campers who were due to return home that day all left. It would be hours before the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office would be notified of the murder.

So when did you find out that something had, had happened?

00:15:19 STEWART

My mother and her sisters and my grandmother were all sitting in the kitchen talking like they did every night and so my cousin Ricky and I were watching TV. I don't know where the rest of the crowd was but, maybe the 8:00 o'clock news comes on and the breaking story is that there had been a Girl Scout murdered at the Flying G Ranch and of course, so I'm looking at this like I can't believe it.

00:15:47 CENSULLO

It took a few seconds for the kids to process the information.

00:15:53 STEWART

I haven't had many times in my life where something pops up about me, per say, you know? But I understand what that, like all of a sudden, "Oh gosh, that's me," you know? Well, I think it took a good couple of seconds for it to register that, you know, we'd just been up there that morning and that was the camp. And they didn't say anything about Slim at that point, of course, but that you know. We'd just been there and so it took a minute. It took a while to get that straight in our heads so I remember my cousin and I and then I said we gotta let them know right now so. We went in there and told them. And I mean, we certainly weren't going to sit there and listen to the rest of the news and not, or wait till the first commercial, you know.

00:16:39 CENSULLO

And if it took a second for the news to settle in for the kids, well, the same is true for the adults who listened to what Steve was telling them with a heavy dose of skepticism.

00:16:53 STEWART

And of course they didn't believe us at first, or believe me and then they got it then they got it, you know? And then it was just. It you know, when you know when you're a kid, you see the adults sort of change their mood about stuff. That's what happened there like this was real serious. And then they came in the room there, and I think they got about 3 channels back in those days and they're flipping those channels back and forth trying to catch the rest of the story. And of course there's no Internet back then where you could Google what had happened. And then it was in the paper the next day, and I mean it was really, really something. I mean it, nobody knew what to make of that.

00:17:36 CENSULLO

When it comes to murder investigations, detectives always look at those closest to the victim. Family, friends, other relationships, but Peggy was raped and strangled at a remote all-girls camp, a 2-hour drive from home so it shouldn't come as a surprise that the first person to come under suspicion was the only man at the camp. Slim Sherwood.

What do you think his response would have been to someone from the Sheriff's Office showing up at his cabin wanting to take him in for questioning?

00:18:11 STEWART

He was very docile. I think he would have done whatever they asked him to do, and I think underlying all that I think he would feel really hurt that anybody would even think he did this.

00:18:23 CENSULLO

Slim's name hit the local papers on Tuesday morning. Sheriff Harold Bray told reporters that the caretaker would voluntarily take a polygraph exam the next day. Quote, "as much for his own protection as for any other reason." The Sheriff also said his office had been flooded with calls, some crank calls and some genuine ones, demanding that Slim be given a lie detector.

00:18:52 STEWART

She, my aunt Janie was totally, just, I mean, I remember she told me that when they went down to the police station or the Sheriff's Office, whatever it was, that some people, the reporters had asked her questions and she had just gotten irritated with him and wouldn't say anything, which would be like the way Janie would do something but. They were very defensive about him anyway.

00:19:20 CENSULLO

Slim's daughters were protective of their shy, scarred father. They knew he wouldn't hurt a fly. He didn't hunt, and the only reason why he kept a gun in his cabin was to shoo away a curious bear or two. Not to mention, they'd all been there at the camp with Slim the weekend of the murder, and while they could concede that as the camp's sole employee Slim needed to be cleared, they also believed there was another reason for the Sheriff's Office interrogation.

00:19:57 STEWART

They thought he was sort of the prime suspect at that point because his face was so disfigured it looked like, they knew Margaret Beck had scratched her assailant. That, you know, he had been the one that had been scratched on the face. And that was disturbing to everybody.

00:20:16 CENSULLO

The day after the two-hour polygraph test, the Sheriff's Office announced that Slim was completely clear of any suspicion in Peggy's murder. But nothing would ever be the same for the 70-year-old man.

00:20:31 STEWART

This was a huge mess for the Girl Scouts to handle and he was almost immediately, just, they just got him out of there. And they put him in a place down in Deckers. It was a one room apartment and they just sort of, they dropped him like a hot potato really, is what I heard.

00:20:54 CENSULLO

According to Steve, the Girl Scout Council recognized the need to up their security. Or rather, add some security to the 300-plus-acre property.

So in terms of security, was there really any security?

00:21:14 STEWART

I don't really think so. I think it was so far off the beaten track and that was the point, I think was to get out, you know, in the woods. It, I just I, if Slim was the security, let's put it this way, you know, he was not the right person for that, but there wouldn't have been any. I mean he would, he spent, was spending his time with us. They had the whole Girl Scout operation working over there some distance removed from where we were. And, uh, I think his job is more just making sure the fences were mended and nothing got out, you know, and that kind of thing. So he wasn't even remotely a security, it was not any. It was not a security job. Let's put it that way.

00:21:58 CENSULLO

So in terms of the fences, I mean these were not fences that were meant to keep people out.

00:22:04 STEWART

Oh no, there's barbed wire all around the place. Yeah, it. And I'm telling you, if you knew what you were doing, you could get in there.

00:22:11 CENSULLO

Nonetheless, the Girl Scout Council had to do something to give parents peace of mind that their daughters would be safe from predators and the optics looked pretty bad for Slim.

00:22:25 STEWART

He just was hurt over the whole thing. I guess that's, uh, I mean, he kind of felt like they thought he really did have something to do with this, maybe. I don't know, he should have, could have seen this guy sneaking around which would be darn near impossible up there.

00:22:44 CENSULLO

With their one and only suspect cleared or so it seemed, investigators tried to develop new leads. Which, according to Mitch Morrissey, wasn't an easy task.

00:22:56 MORRISSEY

To a certain degree, they did put a word, did put the word out and run down the suspects. They weren't really suspects, but you know whatever they could think of, there was that work done.

00:23:09 CENSULLO

The next would-be suspect actually went to investigators one month after the murder. 32-year-old Ancil Teague, Jr., described in newspaper reports as a marine veteran and quote "ex-mental patient," volunteered a confession to Peggy's murder to a pair of Denver patrol officers. The accounts of what happened varied. One report says Teague made the confession following a minor traffic crash while another says he was picked up for a traffic violation. Teague told officers that he drove to the vicinity near the Flying G Ranch to go rabbit hunting. Steve will vouch for the fact that that would have been nearly impossible.

00:23:55 STEWART

And then, you know, anybody that was walking around there, the way things were back then, you know, people stopped their car and asked if you needed a ride. If anybody had seen somebody, believe me that would have been communicated to Slim. You never saw anybody going up there, you know. So if we'd seen somebody I know we would have gone right in and said, "hey there was some guy walking up the road here," and that he had gone down and checked it out. I know that.

00:24:22 CENSULLO

On top of that, Ancil Teague claimed that he didn't take a weapon on his hunting trip and then changed his story twice. He first said he had a 30-aught six rifle and then said he took a 22. He was also vague about whether he'd sexually assaulted Peggy as well as the time and place of the murder. The investigators believe that Teague, knowledge of the crime appeared to be no more than what was published in papers and ultimately concluded he'd concocted the whole story.

Four months after Peggy was killed, a man named James "Mad Dog" Sherbondy was identified as a suspect in her case. Mad Dog had recently been paroled after serving 25 of a 44-year sentence for killing a deputy Sheriff in Eagle County, Colorado. Not only was he a convicted murderer, but he'd also been the ringleader of a group of convicts that pulled off a prison break in 1947. Twelve inmates escaped and Sherbondy was the last of "The Dirty Dozen" to be recaptured after he took a family hostage. In total, Sherbondy spent around seven years in solitary confinement. Not long after he was paroled, Mad Dog Sherbondy couldn't be tracked down, raising concerns that he might have had something to do with Peggy's death. But he turned up in Illinois, where he'd been arrested for robbing a supermarket. Jefferson County investigators went to talk to Sherbondy and collect hair samples from him. Sheriff Brey said the hair was to be compared to her found in Peggy's sleeping bag. This is the only reference to possible hair evidence I found in my documentation of the case, by the way. Nonetheless, Sherbondy was cooperative and was cleared as a suspect, but he went back to prison on the robbery charge. That didn't last long. In November of '69, Mad Dog escaped again. He was killed in a shootout with Denver police after a high-speed chase through downtown. A pair of pipe bombs were found in his car. Detective Michael Dowd was critically wounded in the gunfight but survived. Although his life would be cut short due to the injuries he received.

In April of 1964, a man named Irwin Face Stewart, no relation to Steve Stewart, who was accused of robbery in Phoenix was questioned in Peggy's murder. He was also under suspicion for the murder of Texas socialite Jane Langdon. Langdon's body was found in an abandoned mine in Maricopa County, Arizona. She'd been sexually assaulted and shot several times. Stewart passed a lie detector and was cleared in Peggy's case. He was eventually charged in Langdon's murder, but was acquitted on Christmas Eve, 1965. Langdon's murder remains unsolved.

It's about that time that, at least as far as Steve remembers it, investigators circled back to Slim Sherwood.

00:27:58 STEWART

Their perception was is that they were, just hadn't found anybody that did this, and so there's a lot of pressure to get this thing solved. And that's why I remember there was this second phase of where they brought him back in again.

00:28:14 CENSULLO

But again, Slim was cleared and returned to his sparse apartment in Deckers. Steve's sister went to visit him a couple of years after.

00:28:25 STEWART

He seemed to be doing alright, but you could tell the whole, it was just his whole life had really just been irretrievably just changed and I don't know. It's probably too romantic to put it this way, but it was like the magic spell was broken. I mean, you know, he wasn't outside anymore. He wasn't handling horses. You know, this kind of thing.

00:28:48 CENSULLO

In 1967, Slim Sherwood died of a stroke.

00:28:53 STEWART

I mean, my mother said that she thought this just killed him. Uh, not to compare this in any way with what the Becks went through. I mean my God, that's horrible, but, this thing. Really, he was never the same after this.

00:29:08 CENSULLO

Steve's family was never the same either.

00:29:13 STEWART

And I'll tell you one other thing that my sister told me the other day that. When my sister asked my mother if she could get in and be a Brownie, mother told her she couldn't. She was so mad at the Girl Scout people. Now right, whether that's deserved or not, I don't really know, but. Again, they just really didn't like the way it was handled by them.

00:29:41 CENSULLO

The investigation seemed to have hit a standstill after that. The next time the case appeared in the news was a decade after Slim passed away. In June of 1977, three Girl Scouts were murdered at Camp Scott, a rugged and secluded Girl Scout camp near Locust Grove, OK, about 45 miles east of Tulsa. It's a case. That's been the subject of documentaries for decades, including this one by PBS station, OETA.

00:30:21 HICKS

Two of the girls were from Tulsa and one of the girls was from Broken Arrow and um, I think it, I think it sort of shocked the entire area. You know, that three Girl Scouts could come out here for a peaceful encampment and be sexually murdered and two found in zippered up in their sleeping bags, and another one nude from the waist down. You know, strangled.

00:30:49 FALLIS

These three were sharing a tent. One young lady named Farmer, one named Milner, and one named Guse. I can't remember their exact.

00:30:59 CENSULLO

Lori Lee Farmer was eight years old. Michelle Guce was nine and Doris Denise Milner was 10. It was the first night of camp. Sometime between 2:00 and 4:00 AM someone crept into the tent occupied by the girls and attacked them. According to court records, the probable cause of Lori and Michelle's deaths was blunt trauma to the head while Doris died of asphyxiation due to ligature strangulation. A local, Gene Leroy Hart, was arrested, but acquitted of the murders. Hart, a convicted rapist, died in prison of a heart attack in 1979. Despite advancements in DNA testing, the girls' murders remain unsolved.

When questioned in 1977 about the similarities between the murder at the Flying G and the murder at Camp Scott, then Jefferson County Sheriff Lieutenant William Flint said he would watch for any links in the cases. What he didn't mention was that there had been another attack at the Flying G Ranch. It had happened the year before. A 13-year-old was woken up by a man strangling her. She was able to wriggle her arms free of her sleeping bag and fight back, punching the man and making enough noise to wake up another girl in her tent who turned on a flashlight. The man fled. The public wasn't told about the attack. When questioned in 1977, a Denver Girl Scout official said there had been no reported incidents at the camp since Peggy's murder in 1963, but the next day, another Girl Scout official admitted there had been an attack. It hadn't been publicized, she said, because quote, "we didn't know much and didn't want to alarm people unnecessarily." As to why another Girl Scout official had said there weren't any reported incidences, the response was quote, "it all depends on how you interpret 'incident'." The Sheriff's Office later confirmed that there had been an investigation into the 1976 attack. But they said that information had been quote "red tagged" at the request of the Girl Scout Council. That was apparently a procedure to screen sensitive cases or details that jeopardize investigations. I requested any documents available on the incident from the Sheriff's office but was told nothing could be located. There's no indication that the incident was included in the case file for Peggy Beck's murder.

Despite more than 300 people being questioned in Peggy's case, there doesn't appear to be any suspects identified after 1977. By then Peggy's mom, Myrna, had passed away. Myrna and Vince divorced in 1974. And Myrna's mom died a few months later. I haven't been able to find her cause of death. Vince remarried a woman named Margie in 1976 and he died in 2009. He's buried at the same cemetery as Peggy.

Jefferson County's investigation into Peggy's murder became a cold case and then a very cold case. The only thing that would make a difference was new evidence. Or, an advancement in forensic science to analyze the existing evidence with.

00:34:56 STEWART

You know it's just a miracle, really. I mean, thank goodness they kept that sleeping bag and then everything else fell into place.

00:35:03 CENSULLO

On the next episode of The Evidence Speaks:

00:35:09 JOAN

That was how we found it.

00:35:11 CENSULLO

A retiree who loves to go fishing wound up with the catch of the day for cold case investigators and helps clear the name of Slim Sherwood. But a new mystery unfolds.

00:35:26 STEWART

The you know, the Beck family needs closure on this and I think even if the guy's been gone for 30 years, but they can just go and piece together what he did and where he went and all that. I think that's about the best you can do with this.

00:35:40 JOAN

You know, let's get answers to this family and to communities that these people are from.

00:35:49 DUFFIN

The Evidence Speaks is a production of FIU's Global Forensic and Justice Center. Meredyth Censullo is responsible for the research, writing, and editing.

Our subject matter experts are Kevin Lothridge, Director of the GFJC and Mitch Morrissey from United Data Connect.

We'd like to thank Steve Stewart for his contribution to this episode.

If you have any tips regarding the whereabouts of James Raymond Taylor, we ask that you contact the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.

